

## **Historic, Archive Document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.





# The ORGANIZER

Department of Agriculture Lodge 31

American Federation  
of  
Government Employees

A. F. G. E.



Affiliated With  
American Federation  
of Labor

VOL. 2

JUNE, 1937

No. 5

## LODGE 31 FIGHTS FALSE ECONOMY

### A. F. G. E. NATIONAL OFFICE INACTIVE IN DIRE EMERGENCY

At the May 6 meeting of Lodge 31 the economy drive which has been developing in Congress in the last few months was brought up for discussion. Various members pointed out the menace to both the public and federal employees of such measures as the Byrnes and Cannon proposals. These provide for flat, unscientific cuts of from 10 to 15 percent in all appropriations. It was agreed that such proposals mean the arbitrary curtailment of necessary governmental functions through reductions in force following decreased appropriations. Furthermore, it was pointed out that a cut of 10 to 15 percent in appropriations would mean from 20 to 25 percent cut in personnel due to necessary fixed charges. Finally, it was emphatically concluded that such proposals represent false economy inasmuch as the saving realized would be more than offset by the curtailment of socially necessary governmental functions.

In view of the menace of this false economy, it became clear to the members that a vigorous campaign on the part of the National Office of the A. F. G. E. should be inaugurated immediately. A resolution embodying demands for immediate and aggressive action was forwarded to the National Office and to all lodges of the A. F. G. E.

In further pursuance of this conviction, a delegation representing six lodges, namely, Agriculture 31, Labor 12, I. C. C. 58, W. P. A. 139, Resettlement 206 and G. A. O. 8, conferred with Colonel Stengle, National President, who informed them that he had been assured by high officials that there would be no cuts in the salaries of classified employees. Furthermore, he

flatly refused to alter the do-nothing policy of the National Office despite pleas by the delegation to lead all government employees in a vigorous drive against false economy. Following the declaration by the delegation that the lodges themselves would be forced to take independent action in calling a mass meeting, Colonel Stengle issued a "cease and desist" order, implying that further steps in this direction might result in suspension of the lodges concerned.

(Continued on Page Three)

### LODGE 31 URGES JOINT ACTION BY AGRICULTURAL UNIONS

Lodge 31 of the Department of Agriculture extends greetings, with this first printed issue of *The Organizer*, to the several establishments and their lodges in the Department, namely—Resettlement Lodge 206, Bureau of Public Roads Lodge 344, Soil Conservation Lodge 373, Weather Bureau Lodge 28, Agricultural Adjustment Administration Lodge 116, and Beltsville Lodge.

We wish to stress the significance of this edition to all establishments of the Department, due to its presentation and discussion of the all-important achievements of Lodge 31 for the employees of the whole Department of Agriculture in the official promulgation of a reemployment and a promotions agreement.

In the past there has been considerable cooperation among the several employee organizations within the Department on important matters. Lodge 31 expresses a strong wish for continued cooperation among the several Departmental union organizations and urges that such cooperation be accentuated and strengthened by the setting up of a joint committee to handle such matters as grievances, program, and legislation.

### LODGE 31 WINS REEMPLOYMENT SET-UP

At a conference May 10 between the Grievance Committee of Lodge 31 and the Acting Director of Personnel, Mr. Gladmon, the Grievance Committee pressed for the establishment of a reemployment register in Agriculture to provide for employees who have been, or may be in the future, separated due to reduction in force. The direct result of this conference is the issuance of Personnel Circular No. 45 giving preference in job placement to persons who may be so registered.

In view of the pending dismissal of many employees on June 30, the establishment of this preferential reemployment register is extremely timely. However, the reemployment machinery is permanent in character and thus the value of its service to all employees of the Department of Agriculture in the future cannot be measured.

From the standpoint of adequacy, the only criticisms that this lodge can offer are, (1) the distribution was confined to employees about to be separated, (2) the requirement of "un-

(Continued on Page Three)

### OFFICIAL ACTION ON PATENTS AGREEMENTS EXPECTED

In our May issue of the ORGANIZER we announced that a commission representing Bureau Chiefs and representatives of Lodge 31 had agreed on a procedure to be adopted by the Department in handling patents of Department inventors.

This procedure provides for prompt consideration of all patents of Department inventors and opportunity for

(Continued on Page Three)



## USDA ORGANIZER

*Published Monthly by*  
**LODGE 31, A. F. G. E.**

*Editor, DELLA COGAN*

*Associate Editors*  
**NELLIE SHAFFER LOUIS MATOSOFF**  
**NORMAN MATHIAS**

(Circulation 10,000)

ees separated due to reduction in force; thirdly, the promotions agreement providing for promotions from within the Department.

Without the support of all employees such achievements are difficult of accomplishment. With their support, the Union can go on to bigger and better things. Join Lodge 31! You owe it to yourself and to your fellow employees to join an organization which is laboring energetically and unceasingly in your behalf.

Lodge 31 will hold its regular meeting in Room 2050, South Building on Thursday evening, June 17, at 8:00 p.m. The importance of this meeting cannot be too strongly stressed due to the independent course of action embarked upon by Lodge 31 and the attendant threats of the National Office. All members are urged to be present.

## LODGE 31 INSISTS ON RIGHTS OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The attitude of the Administration in the Department of Agriculture and its conduct in relations with the Union for the past few weeks have, in our opinion, constituted an infringement on the basic rights of collective bargaining.

Specifically, Lodge 31 presented the two very important proposals for a reemployment register and a promotions from within policy which have been adopted and promulgated by the Administration. However, the Administration pursued a unilateral policy in reference to these important measures; it revised them in accordance with its own views and promulgated them without according the Union the opportunity to discuss the changes made by the Administration.

Lodge 31 protests vigorously against this treatment by the Administration. Furthermore, the Lodge insists that the Administration in all future negotiations accord the Union its fundamental right to consider any revisions and present its suggestions and criticisms before putting into effect measures which have been proposed by the Union.

## SUPPORT YOUR UNION

Recent significant achievements of Lodge 31 supply added and overwhelming reasons why all employees of the Department of Agriculture should affiliate immediately with the organization which is promoting their interests.

Attention is called first, to the recently promulgated patents agreement which restates the rights of employees to patent discoveries made not directly in pursuance of their official duties; secondly, to the establishment of the reemployment register which provides for preferential treatment of employ-

## Official Text of the Reemployment Set-up

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
 OFFICE OF DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL  
 WASHINGTON, D. C.

May 17, 1937.

Personnel Circular No. 45.

*Establishment of a Departmental Reemployment List for  
 Employees With Civil Service Status.*

There will be set up in the Division of Appointments of the Department of Agriculture a departmental reemployment list for employees with Civil Service status in the Department of Agriculture who have been separated, will be separated or will be furloughed because of reduction in force.

When it is known that an employee is to be furloughed or separated because of a reduction in force, the employee should be given at least 15 days notice, plus accrued annual leave. The employee should be advised that he may, upon application to the Division of Appointments, secure the necessary application blank for completion in order to have his name placed on a departmental reemployment list. The persons who file application for the departmental reemployment list and whose records have been good and who are unqualifiedly recommended by the bureau or establishment in which they last served, will have their names placed on reemployment registers for all positions for which they have qualified through appropriate Civil Service examination and to which they are eligible for transfer under Civil Service rules.

When a vacancy occurs in any bureau or office of the Department of Agriculture, the bureau or office should first consider for the position those persons who have been furloughed or separated from the service of the Department because of reduction in force before consideration is given to the filling of the vacancy by transfer from another department or establishment of the government and before request for certification of eligibles is made on the Civil Service Commission. If a request for a certification of eligibles is received in the Division of Appointments, the applications of those whose names appear on the department reemployment list will be sent for consideration to the bureau where the vacancy exists. If the persons whose names and applications are submitted to the bureau for filling the vacancy are not considered satisfactory for the purpose of filling the vacancy, the reasons why such persons are not satisfactory must be given to the Division of Appointments before the vacancy may be filled by transfer from another department or certification of eligibles secured from the Civil Service Commission.

P. L. GLADMON,  
*Acting Director of Personnel.*

(See Article on Page One and Editorials on Page Two)



## "PROMOTIONS" POLICY ISSUED

Personnel Circular No. 46, entitled *Department of Agriculture Employees to Be Given Preference in Filling Vacancies in This Department*, dated May 26, 1937, has been issued by The Personnel Office.

This circular specifies that when a vacancy occurs which cannot be filled from within the Bureau, applications will be accepted from employees in other offices in the Department. The circular states that these applications should receive preference over eligibles submitted by the Civil Service Commission. Actually, little more is specified but that the Bureaus or offices shall "carefully consider" such applications, and, in the event of rejection, that reasons must be given.

Such a scheme has many shortcomings. First, nothing is said about promotions within the Bureau itself. A Bureau is a large establishment. Putting the promotions procedure on a Divisional basis would provide a more equitable base for filling vacancies. Second, "Bureaus or Offices are authorized to select from the applicants in this Department, the applicants from other departments, applicants for reinstatement, and from certificates of eligibles (Civil Service), the person or

persons who, in the judgment of the Bureaus or Offices, are considered best qualified for the position." This places in the hands of the Bureau Chief the widest possible discretion. There is no reason why employees in the Department of Agriculture whose records are good should have to compete with any one who might possibly be eligible for a Civil Service position. Thirdly, there should be some established procedure for appealing what are considered unfair placements or discrimination.

It is significant that the Department has been made to realize, through joint Union action, of the need for a better system of promotions. Personnel Circular No. 46 presents a positive gain for the employees in the Department. But it is inadequate. More assurances should be given that "promotions from within" will be the rule.

We propose to see the Administration again with the prospect of improving the present plan. We do not feel that employees of the Department of Agriculture can be entirely satisfied with a plan which places them in competition with all other Civil Service eligibles. The very purpose of a Promotions Plan is to avoid such undue competition and to reward those who have already served well in the department.

The opening gun in the nation-wide campaign against false economy will be sounded at a mass meeting at the Willard Hotel on the evening of June 10 at 8:00 p. m. *All employees of the Department of Agriculture as well as lodge members are urged to attend.*

## DISTRICT DEPARTMENT DENIES MORE SEATS TO DELEGATES

The leadership of the District Department has still further demonstrated its intolerance of liberal views by denying a seat to Brother Perkins, President of the State Department Lodge 71, solely on the ground that he had publicly expressed his approval of the aims of the American Civil Liberties Union.

This unseating took place at the May 14 meeting of the Department upon motion of the Credentials Committee to defer seating, amended by Brother Schricker to seat immediately and further amended by a substitute motion to unseat in permanence, submitted by Delegate Cecil E. Custer of the Civil Service Commission, National Treasurer. Speaking on the  
(Continued on Page Four)

## PATENTS AGREEMENT

(Continued from Page One)

appeal from divisions of Bureau Chiefs and rulings of the Solicitors' Office in this regard.

Over a month has passed and the Administration has not yet acted officially on this agreement. Your Grievance Committee is going to take up the matter with the Administration officials responsible for the delay.

We expect to announce a satisfactory conclusion on this matter in our next ORGANIZER.

## REEMPLOYMENT SET-UP

(Continued from Page One)

qualified recommendation" as well as good records. In respect to the first criticism, we feel that all employees should be acquainted with the provisions of this all-important advance toward job security. As to the second, if an employee has a good record, the "unqualified recommendation" feature is either superfluous or else a means for unfair supervisory discrimination.

## Official Memorandum to Lodge 31

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

May 29, 1937.

Memorandum for Mr. Louis Matosoff,  
Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

DEAR MR. MATOSOFF:

Confirming our telephone conversation this morning, I am enclosing a copy of Personnel Circular No. 46, dated May 26, 1937, with reference to Vacancy-Promotion program which has been previously discussed with representatives of Lodge 31, A. F. G. E. I believe that this proposed procedure will be very helpful in affording our employees better opportunities for advancement in the Department. I am also enclosing a copy of the application form referred to in the Circular.

Very truly yours,

P. L. GLADMON,  
Acting Director of Personnel.

Enclosures.

## FALSE ECONOMY

(Continued from Page One)

The position of the National Office was reported to the lodge at its next meeting on May 19. After brief discussion, the membership voted unanimously to authorize the Executive

Committee to assist the other lodges in the formation of independent action against the economy drive. Under the cooperative leadership of Lodge 31 and the other lodges in the delegation to Colonel Stengle, the Committee Against False Economy was established.



### Official Text of the Promotions Agreement

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

May 26, 1937.

Personnel Circular No. 46.

*Department of Agriculture Employees to Be Given Preference  
In Filling Vacancies In This Department.*

When a vacancy occurs within a bureau or independent office of the Department and cannot be filled from within the bureau or office, a request for certifications of eligibles should be submitted to the Director of Personnel of the Department of Agriculture, giving a description of the duties of the position and the requirements with respect to education and experience in filling it. From these requests for certification the essential information regarding the vacancy will be compiled and circularized throughout the Department and posted on bulletin boards in the Department. The information will also be furnished any available publications such as the "Agricultural Exchange" and to employees' organizations represented in the Department. Employees of the Department of Agriculture are then afforded the opportunity of filing with the Division of Appointments of the Department application forms which may be secured from the personnel officers of their bureaus or from the Division of Appointments. These applications will be checked in the Division of Appointments to determine the eligibility and suitability of the applicants for appointment to the position. Simultaneously with the advertisement of these vacancies as indicated above, requests for certification of eligibles will be made on the Civil Service Commission. Employees will be allowed one week from the date of advertising of the vacancies to file their application with the Division of Appointments, and the applications of those persons who are qualified for the vacancies will then be sent to the bureaus or offices where the vacancies exist, together with the Civil Service certificates of eligibles, for consideration. The bureaus or offices should carefully consider the applications and if the persons whose applications are submitted are not considered qualified for the vacancies, a statement of the reasons why they are not qualified should be submitted to the Division of Appointments, with the return of the applications. The bureaus or offices are authorized to select from the applicants in this Department, the applicants from other departments, applicants for reinstatement, and from certificates of eligibles, the person or persons who, in the judgment of the bureaus or offices, are considered best qualified for the position. Employees of the Department of Agriculture who have made application for the filling of vacancies must receive adequate consideration, however, before approval will be given for filling vacancies by transfer, reinstatement, or selection from Civil Service certificates of eligibles.

One application for a specific position is sufficient to insure consideration for future identical vacancies. In other words, if a vacancy for senior stenographer should be advertised and an application from an employee is received for that position, it will not be necessary for the employee to file another application when another position for senior stenographer is advertised.

The above procedure, for the present at least, is limited to permanent vacancies in Washington, D. C., except in special cases when the bureaus may wish to recruit a specialized class of personnel for appointment to vacancies in the field.

P. L. GLADMON,  
*Acting Director of Personnel.*

### LODGE 31 FIGHTS COMPANY UNIONISM IN THE A. F. G. E.

Lodge 31 at its last regular meeting passed a resolution endorsing the pro-

posed constitutional amendment drawn up by Labor Lodge 12, providing that no official of the Civil Service Commission or personnel officer in the government be permitted to hold office

in the American Federation of Government Employees.

The necessity for such an amendment arises from the fact that Civil Service officials and personnel officers are restricted by the character of their duties from taking vigorous action against the administration they represent. The function of the A. F. G. E. should be to improve constantly the standards and conditions of government employees. If such officers control the policy of the A. F. G. E., it is evident that existing injustices in the system will remain.

### DISTRICT DEPARTMENT

*(Continued from Page Three)*

motion, National Vice President Carol Dimond charged that the American Civil Liberties Union was a communist organization, which charge drew heated objections from many present who happened to be members of that organization. Delegate Dimond qualified his remark by saying, "It is reported that the American Civil Liberties Union is a communist organization."

At its May 28 meeting, further indignity was heaped upon the State Department Lodge by the refusal to seat two alternates certified by that Lodge. Questioned as to the reason for the motion not to seat, Delegate Fee, acting chairman of the Credentials Committee, stated, "I do not have to give a reason." Unseating followed by the usual partisan vote of 96 to 39. The meeting was marked by considerable acrimony including a physical assault by Delegate Custer of the Civil Service Lodge upon one of the State Department representatives whose name was not learned.

At the same meeting the District Department went on record as opposing the action taken by Agriculture and other Lodges in setting up a "Committee Against False Economy." Dominated as it is by government officials, such as James Yaden and Cecil Custer of the Civil Service Commission, Carol Dimond of the Adjutant General's Office, Ira Bain of Internal Revenue, and others, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the District of Columbia Department of the A. F. G. E. can furnish little action of benefit to the rank and file of government employees.